

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 19831

BRUSSELS FOR S/S

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S VISIT TO LONDON:  
MEETING WITH TED HEATH

1. AS ARRANGED BY TELCONS, SECRETARY WILL BE MEETING  
WITH HEATH SATURDAY EVENING. FOLLOWING IS STATUS REPORT  
OF HEATH'S ACTIVITY DURING PAST FEW MONTHS.

2. FORMER TORY LEADER HEATH MADE AN ELECTRIC APPEARANCE  
AT THE CONSERVATIVE CONFERENCE IN BRIGHTON IN EARLY  
OCTOBER WHERE HE DELIVERED AN IMPASSIONED AND IMPRESSIVE  
ADDRESS ON THE GRAVITY OF BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC CRISIS.  
HE PRAISED TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP FOR ITS "RESPONSI-  
BILITY" AND, PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, ENDORSED THE  
CONSERVATIVES' JUST-ISSUED STATEMENT OF AIMS ("THE  
RIGHT APPROACH") AND, TO A LIMITED EXTENT AND FOR THE  
FIRST TIME, MRS. THATCHER'S LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY.  
THE SPEECH, CONSIDERED THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE CONFERENCE,  
THUS SEEMED TO SIGNAL A MOVE BACK INTO THE FOLD OF THE  
PARTY'S LONG-SULKING DEPOSED LEADER.

3. RUNNING THROUGHOUT PARLIAMENT THEREAFTER, HOWEVER,  
HAVE BEEN FREQUENT RUMORS REGARDING BOTH HEATH'S POOR  
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESENT PARTY LEADERSHIP AND HIS  
EFFORTS TO HEAD UP THE GROUP OF CONSERVATIVE MPS WHO  
ARE LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THAT LEADERSHIP. THERE  
WERE HINTS OF HIS LACK OF APPRECIATION FOR THE PER-  
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FORMANCE OF CONSERVATIVE SPOKESMEN, PARTICULARLY ON

ECONOMIC TOPICS, AND HIS APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO ENDORSE THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANNED SOLUTIONS TO BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC POLICIES. SOME MPS SPECULATED THAT IN HER RESHUFFLE OF THE SHADOW CABINET MRS. THATCHER WOULD OFFER HIM THE POST OF SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER. WHEN THE RESHUFFLE FINALLY TOOK PLACE IN MID-NOVEMBER THERE WAS LITTLE EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS OPTION HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED AND THERE WAS NO PROOF OF ANY DISCUSSION BETWEEN MRS. THATCHER AND HEATH ON THE RESHUFFLE; HEATH SUPPORTERS ALSO SEEMED TO BE GIVEN SHORT SHRIFT IN THE RESHUFFLE.

4. IN A NOVEMBER TALK TO ONE OF HIS FAVORITE AUDIENCES (GREATER LONDON YOUNG CONSERVATIVES), HEATH CRITICIZED HIS CONSERVATIVE COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE MADE MERRY OVER TWO HOARY THEMES IN RECENT WEEKS: THE ABUSE OF BRITAIN'S SOCIAL SERVICES ("THE WELFARE SCROUNGERS") AND THE "REDS IN THE BEDS OF THE LABOR PARTY." HEATH SAID THESE TARGETS HAD BECOME OVER-USED AND HE THOUGHT THE CONSERVATIVES WERE LOSING VOTERS RATHER THAN GAINING BY REPEATING THEIR ATTACKS.

5. OVER THE DEVOLUTION ISSUE HEATH HAS PUBLICLY INDICATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO STAND APART FROM THE PARTY'S 3-LINE WHIP ON THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVOLUTION BILL. PARTY LEADERSHIP HAD AGONIZED FOR SOME TIME OVER DEVOLUTION AND, FOLLOWING A HEATED DEBATE IN THE SHADOW CABINET, THE PARTY ULTIMATELY DECIDED TO OPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT'S BILL. IN A SPEECH IN GLASGOW DECEMBER 6 HEATH INDICATED HE WOULD NOT BE BOUND TO VOTE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S BILL ALTHOUGH HE APPEARS TO HAVE RESISTED THE TEMPTATION TO HEAD UP A DIVISIVE GROUP OF MPS WHO WISH PUBLICLY TO DISAVOW THE SHADOW CABINET'S DECISION. DIFFERENCES ON CONSERVATIVE POLICY AND TACTICS ON THE DEVOLUTION BILL GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF A WIDENING SPLIT IN THE THATCHER-HEATH RELATIONSHIP. BUT THE MEDIA HAVE PROBABLY EXAGGERATED THE EXTENT OF THE BREACH.

6. OUTSIDE THE FIELD OF POLITICS, HEATH HAS GOTTEN A GOOD PRESS ON HIS RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOK ON MUSIC, BUT CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS PANNED BY REVIEWERS FOR HIS CONDUCTING OF THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. HE HAS ALSO SOLD MORNING CLOUD III (REPORTEDLY AT A PROFIT).

ARMSTRONG

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